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Growth Strategies Acquisitions Sales and Marketing

WHY THERE AREN'T MORE WOMEN IN THIS MAGAZINE

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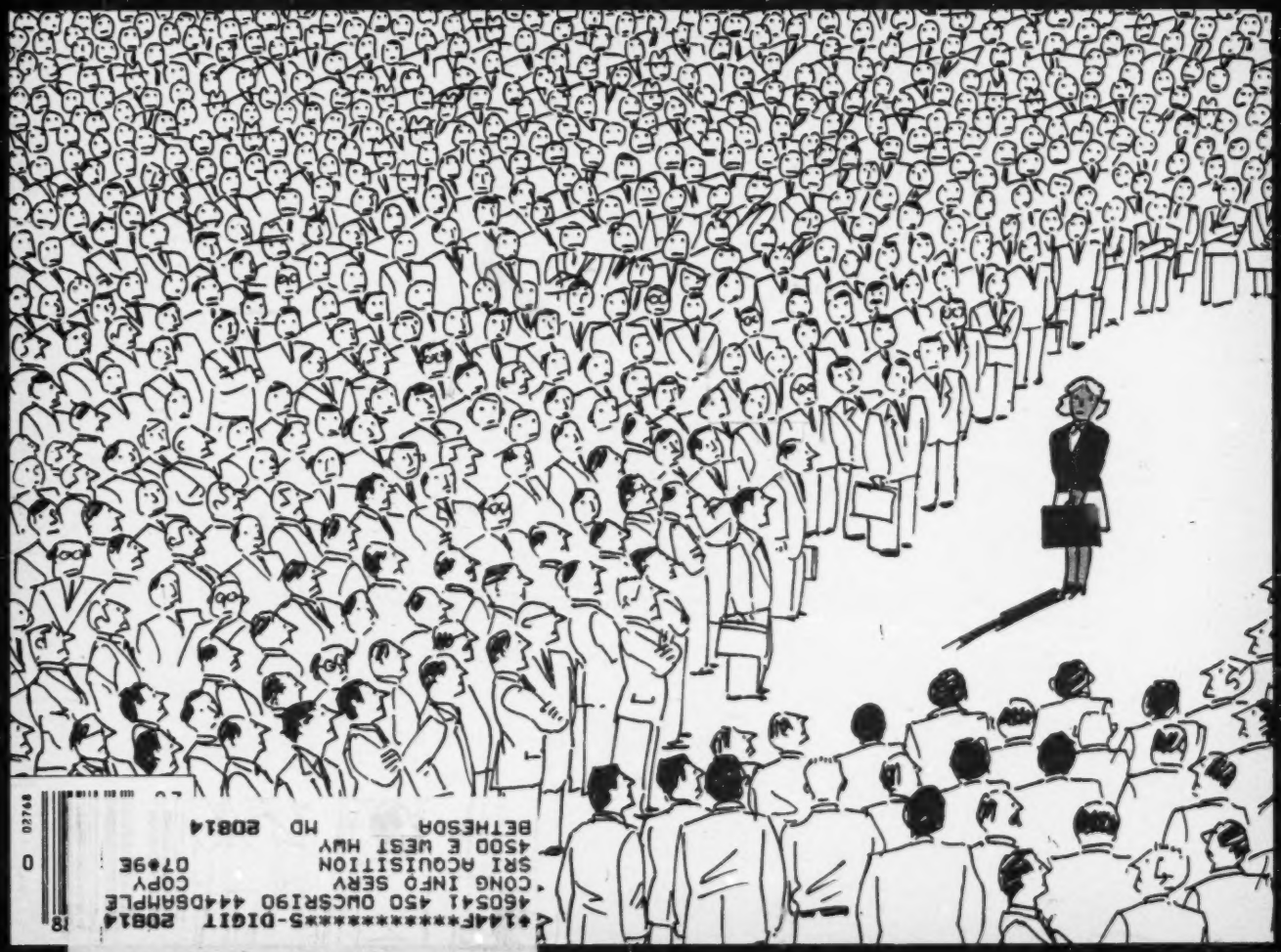

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COVER ILLUSTRATION
by
Guy Billout

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sion guidelines that impose liability without regard to whether the employer knew what was going on. "The issue is whether companies are strictly liable for the acts of their supervisors," says Brian Hembacher, directing attorney of Los Angeles's Department of Fair Employment & Housing.

The outcome of Vinson's battle could change the way businesses manage their employees. Small companies, many of which don't even have formal policies, may have to become aggressive in telling employees about corporate policy and in opening up grievance procedures. Some may begin inquiring about personal lives. "Companies could be put in the position of having to be absolute insurers of their employees' behavior," says Stephen Bokat, vice-president of the National Chamber Litigation Center. "They may even want to prohibit any kind of sexual behavior between employees, which will raise questions about invasion of privacy."

—Joshua Hyatt

As a pharmacist, he had plenty of medications to soothe his son's hacking cough. But there was a rub: none offered croup therapy specifically for infants. So he mixed his own salve, adding an untried, minty Japanese drug called menthol. When the ointment worked, he sold his Greensboro, N.C., drugstore and started a company. Total sales were a sickly $433 during 1905, his first year. It wasn't until the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 that Lunsford Richardson's ointment caught on. Vicks VapoRub brought in $1 million in sales in 1918. And Richardson-Vicks Inc. was on its way to becoming a billion-dollar drug company.

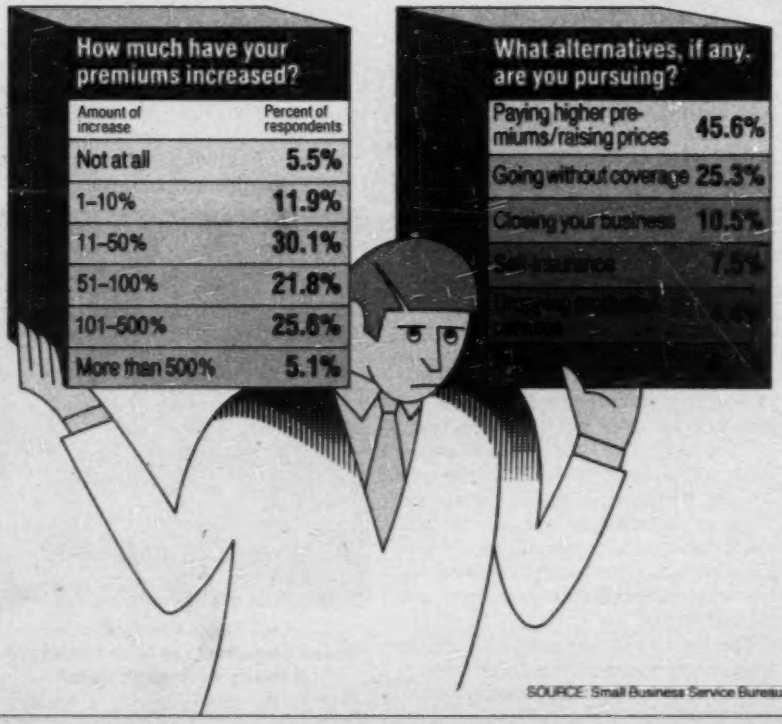
SCORECARD

INSURANCE OPTIONS

Small businesses have several unpalatable options when it comes to soaring rates for liability insurance. One out of three companies is going without insurance, according to a survey by the Small Business Service Bureau Inc. (SBSB) of its 35,000 members, which are mostly companies with less than $3 million in annual sales. More than 10% are closing their doors, although insurance problems for many of these companies may simply be the last straw or a convenient excuse.

Half the respondents reported a premium rate hike between 50% and 500%. But it's not because of a bad record: 85% say they've never had a claim filed against them. Below are selected SBSB survey findings.

—Leslie Boltax Aizenman



SOURCE: Small Business Service Bureau

NIGEL HOLMES

ONLY IN AMERICA

Great Moments In Corporate Work Rules

—From an Associated Press dispatch

A MAN HAS BEEN DISMISSED AFTER leaving his maintenance job to respond to an emergency call to help two victims of heart attack.

"When you're talking about a heart attack victim, you have four to six minutes to respond," said the maintenance worker, Collin Swift, who is 43 years old. "I knew what I had to do."

Mr. Swift, who is a volunteer emergency medical technician, is challenging the dismissal through a union grievance procedure.

He received an urgent call from an ambulance service Feb. 21 while he was working at the Pine River Baker Industries-Durkee plant. He was told that an elderly couple were having simultaneous heart attacks. . . . When he left his job at 11:20, he said he did not tell a company supervisor or get a written slip acknowledging his sudden departure, as company rules require. . . . [Said Swift]: "I thought someone's life was worth more than going through the ritual of hunting up a supervisor." . . . Both the heart attack victims survived.

Dismissed worker Collin Swift
"I thought someone's life was worth more . . . than finding a supervisor."

Mr. Swift signed a return-to-work form at 1 p.m. that day. Three days later he was dismissed from the job he had held nearly 18 years.

Bill Waller, industrial relations manager for Sunoco, which owns the Pine River plant, said in a statement: . . . "We do want to make it clear that our corporate and local practices are to encourage employees to be involved in civic activities. In fact, many of our employees are able to engage in such volunteer services and still abide by the plant rules that have been established."

INSIDER (continued)